

This Congressional neglect—again, 9 years since the last increase—is the longest since the minimum wage was created. The results have been devastating.

A full-time minimum wage worker earns only \$10,712 per year—almost \$6,000 under the poverty line for a family of three.

Furthermore, this low wage is often the only wage of the house—nearly half of all minimum wage workers are the sole breadwinner in their households.

Today, we will change that and millions of workers will benefit. This extra money—nearly \$4,000 for a full-time minimum wage earner—means that they won't have to choose between buying drugs for their children, and putting food on the family dinner table.

It is unacceptable for a person working a full-time job in the richest country in the world to live in poverty.

Mr. Speaker, it is high time that we pay American workers what they deserve: a fair day's wage for a day's work.

Raising the minimum wage is the right thing to do, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

THE STANDARDS TO PROVIDE  
EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT  
FOR ALL KIDS (SPEAK) ACT (H.R.  
325)

**HON. VERNON J. EHLERS**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2007

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of the Standards to Provide Educational Achievement for All Kids (SPEAK) Act, H.R. 325.

It has been no secret that I strongly believe that we need to improve our nation's math and science education. High quality math and science education at the K-12 levels is extremely important to ensure that our future workforce is ready to compete in the global economy. We are sacrificing our future and our children's, if we are not investing in today's children.

I have been so concerned about the quality of math and science education in this country, and the limited number of young people who are pursuing math and science-related degrees, that I founded the House STEM Education Caucus with my Democratic colleague MARK UDALL of Colorado in 2004. As you probably know, STEM stands for "Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics."

A resounding bipartisan chorus of business leaders, educators, Nobel laureates and other luminaries has called for improvements in our nation's math and science education, as evidenced by the Business Roundtable's Tapping America's Potential and the National Academies' Rising Above the Gathering Storm reports, as well as President Bush's American Competitiveness Initiative.

While the last Congress was unable to pass comprehensive legislation to improve math and science education, we now have a new opportunity to work in a bipartisan and bicameral fashion: the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 is up for reauthorization this year.

NCLB has made important strides toward strengthening standards-based education and holding states and schools accountable for ensuring that our students are learning. However, with more than 50 different sets of academic standards, state assessments and definitions of proficiency, there is tremendous vari-

ability across our nation in the subject matter our students are learning.

I might add that there also is considerable variation across states and even school districts in the sequencing of math and science courses, which is problematic for our increasingly mobile student population. Our students could lack instruction in certain basic science or math concepts if they transfer between schools with completely different sequences of courses.

Despite NCLB and all of our other efforts, the condition of our state standards is not well. In 2006, the Fordham Foundation reported that two-thirds of U.S. kids attend school in states with academic standards in the C, D, and F range. My own state of Michigan was given a C in math and a D in science despite the fact that Michigan was one of the pioneers in the standards movement. (Michigan adopted science guidelines in 1991). Recently, Michigan adopted the Michigan Merit Curriculum, which describes what students should know at each grade level, and is linked to tougher statewide graduation requirements that, for the first time, mandate 3 years of high school science.

States like Michigan are making substantial improvements, but our Nation as a whole needs to redouble its efforts to ensure that we have all students prepared for the jobs of the future, and must improve the quality of our educational standards from the current average or failing grades to excellent or A plus grades.

The SPEAK Act creates, adopts and recommends rigorous voluntary American education content standards in math and science in grades K-12. The bill tasks the National Assessment Governing Board, in consultation with relevant organizations, to review existing standards and to review the issue of course sequencing as it relates to student achievement.

The SPEAK Act authorizes the American Standards Incentive Fund to incentivize states to adopt excellent math and science standards. It offers an "If You Build It, They Will Come Approach." Let me emphasize that this bill does not establish a national curriculum or national standards. Participation by states is strictly voluntary. I have always felt that the "carrot" is more effective than the "stick" in leading reform. It is my hope that all states will feel the overwhelming responsibility to bolster their state standards in science and math and will step up to the plate.

I am very pleased that 38 organizations listed below have endorsed the SPEAK Act, including national organizations such as the National Education Association, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and the National Science Teachers Association. In addition, organizations in my congressional district and elsewhere in Michigan have endorsed the SPEAK Act, including the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce; the University of Michigan; Michigan State University; the Regional Math and Science Center at Grand Valley State University; Steelcase, Inc.; RoMan Manufacturing, Inc.; Cascade Engineering; and the Michigan Science Teachers Association.

I look forward to working with Senator DODD, other Members and the education and business community in a bipartisan and bicameral fashion to pass the SPEAK Act into law. It will greatly improve our Nation's math and science education. New America Foundation, Thomas B. Fordham Institute, National

Education Association, Alliance for Excellent Education, Council of the Great City Schools, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, National Science Teachers Association, International Reading Association, American Association for the Advancement of Science, The American Chemical Society, Healthcare Leadership Council, SAE International, Math for America, Education Industry Association, National Education Knowledge Industry Association (NEKIA), Eli Broad, Philanthropist/Businessman, The Campaign for Educational Equity, Teachers College, Columbia University, Chicago Science Group, Jacob Ludes, III, Executive Director/CEO, New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), National Center for Technological Literacy, Project Lead the Way, Museum of Science, Boston, Junior Engineering Technical Society (JETS), National Society of Black Engineers, International Technology Education Association, ASME Center for Public Awareness, Building Engineering and Science Talent, San Diego, CA.

Connecticut-Based Organizations: The University of Connecticut, Connecticut Conference of Independent Colleges, Connecticut Federation of School Administrators, Connecticut Principals' Center, Connecticut Association of Schools.

Michigan-Based Organizations: Grand Rapids, MI, Area Chamber of Commerce, Michigan Science Teachers Association, Michigan State University, Cascade Engineering, MI, RoMan Manufacturing, Inc., MI, Regional Math and Science Center, Grand Valley State University, MI Steelcase, Inc.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. CHARLIE NORWOOD**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 11, 2007

Mr. NORWOOD. Madam Speaker, on roll-call No. 18, on passage—H.R. 2, had I been present, I would have voted "no."

MOURNING THE PASSING OF  
PRESIDENT GERALD RUDOLPH  
FORD

SPEECH OF

**HON. MICHAEL R. TURNER**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 9, 2007

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support H. Res. 15, a resolution honoring the life of President Gerald R. Ford. As America remembers President Ford's leadership and service to the American people, I offer my condolences to the Ford family.

While attending former President Ford's funeral, I had the opportunity to converse with Dr. David Mathews, a community leader in my district. Dr. Mathews served as Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare under President Ford and shared with my office some personal stories of the President's legacy. Dr. Mathews recalled: